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Wanted: homes for pound puppies

The dog warden's office is seeking a YSU intern to manage its Web site.

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YOUNGSTOWN — Jinx needs a home.

The 1-year-old Jack Russell terrier peers expectantly from his cage at the Mahoning County Dog Pound and wiggles from nose to tail as visitors approach.

Jinx is one of the many dogs and puppies waiting to be adopted at the pound. He's also listed on the county's Web site, www.mahoningcountyoh.gov, and the Internet pet adoption Web site petfinder.com.

Mike Fox, county dog warden, said that in the few weeks since Mahoning County dogs have been listed on petfinder.com, no dogs have been adopted through the site — but he hopes that will change as the computer capabilities through his office improve.

Fox said his goal is to continually update the petfinder.com entries, and also to be able to list all adoptable puppies and dogs at the county dog pound on the county Web site.

He said computer technicians are working on improving the county site so all dogs can be featured.

Why they're there

Fox said dogs end up at the pound for many reasons other than being an at-large dog picked up by his staff. Sometimes owners surrender their dogs, and have to pay \$20 to the pound to do so.

Jinx was adopted from the pound when he was a young puppy but returned because the family that adopted him decided they wanted a dog that was less active.

A young Rottweiler with a good disposition is at the pound simply because he is very large.

One dog recently adopted had been surrendered to the dog warden by her previous owners because the family found one of their children was allergic to dogs.

Another dog at the pound was brought in by owners worried the dog would be jealous of a new baby in the family.

Fox said others are surrendered because of job or career changes that don't leave time for pets, because owners move into apartments where they cannot keep pets, or because an owner died.

The number of dogs kept at the pound depends on the demand for space and the condition and temperament of the animals, he said.

Vicious dogs are never offered for adoption, Fox said. If dogs cannot be adopted because of their health or temperament, they are euthanized, he said.

Costs to adopt

Anyone who wants to adopt a dog pays the dog warden \$50 for license fees, worming and the first set of shots, then pays an additional fee of \$60 to Animal Charity or Dr. Donald K. Allen to have the animals spayed or neutered if needed.

Animals surrendered by owners or brought in as strays are screened for three days for illness, disease or behavior problems, Fox said. The three-day waiting period also allows time for owners of strays to check the dog pound for their lost pets, he said.

After the three days, any dogs determined to be adoptable are listed as such, he said.

Fox said his department has the equipment to check dogs for the identification computer chip some owners have embedded under the dog's skin.

He stressed the best way to ensure the return of a lost dog is with an identification tag listing the dog's name and owner's phone number. Dog licenses are required by law and owners can be traced that way, but a search by license tag alone takes longer, he said.

"There are always good dogs here, most of them young, and there are always puppies," he said. "There's a lot of turnover, so there are new dogs all the time."

Looking for intern

Fox said through the summer a Youngstown State University intern helped manage the Web site, and he would like to hire another. The internship through YSU's political science department is 15 hours per week with a stipend of \$400.

"We work around the students' schedules, absolutely," Fox said.

He said the intern will be responsible for updating the Web site and taking photos of the dogs to be posted on the county site and petfinder.com.

Dogs available for adoption can be viewed at [www. petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) and the link "local shelters."

The shelters are listed alphabetically by city, so Mahoning County Dog Pound is at the bottom of the page because it is in Youngstown.

To view dogs through the county's site, go to www.mahoningcountyoh.gov. At the bottom of the page is a link "dogs available for adoption."

The kennel at the dog pound is open for adoption Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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